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COMOR-D-49/2

13 November 1961

D R A F T

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, United States
Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Security Handling of Satellite
Reconnaissance Products

1. At the meeting of the United States Intelligence Board on 9 November 1961, the Board instructed the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) to prepare a recommendation on the security handling of satellite reconnaissance products, using as a premise that the collection of ELINT and COMINT by satellite is less sensitive than the collection of photography by satellite and therefore does not require special security handling.

2. The recommendation of COMOR in response to this assignment is set forth in Tab A in the form of a memorandum to the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

3. Recommendation: It is recommended that the United States Intelligence Board approve the attached paper.

Attachment

Tab A

NRO review(s) completed.

Copy 2--State TCO

3, 4--DIA [redacted]

5--JCS TCO

6, 7--QACSI TCO

Approve For Release 2004/07/07 : CIA-RDP79B01709A003500030038-1

9, 10, 11--AFCIN TCO

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12, 13--NSA TCO

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[Redacted Box] **Tab A** [Redacted Box]

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MEMORANDUM FOR: **Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs**

SUBJECT: **Security Handling of Satellite
Reconnaissance Products**

1. This memorandum is in reply to your oral request for advice on whether the Presidential Directive of August 26, 1960, which establishes the TALENT-KEYHOLE Security Control System for the protection of the products of satellite reconnaissance, should include products other than photographic intelligence.

2. It will be recalled that the Presidential Directive arose from the need to protect the product of CORONA (which provides a quality of photography from which information can be drawn applicable directly to intelligence estimates). Subsequently, by White House direction the products of ARGON (from which can be drawn geodetic control data, but not information bearing on intelligence estimates) was included in the TALENT-KEYHOLE System without a requirement for a special compartment. Recently by directive of the United States Air Force the products of SAMOS (presumed at this time to be only photographic) have been included in the TALENT-KEYHOLE System. Weather photography from Project TIROS has never been included in the TALENT-KEYHOLE System on the grounds that it did not provide

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data which would contribute to intelligence estimates as well as that the weather data which it could collect had a major bearing on the peaceful pursuits of mankind.

3. At the present time ELINT collection is being accomplished by means of satellite reconnaissance, and it is anticipated that before long COMINT will be collected by these means. In the future other sensors may be included in satellite payloads for the purpose of collecting intelligence information. It is proposed that when such other sensors included in satellite payloads are available, the United States Intelligence Board should consider what security controls should be applicable in the handling of products of these sensors. Accordingly, this memorandum will deal only with ELINT and COMINT products of satellite reconnaissance.

4. It is already clear from the nature of the successful ELINT collection to date that the collection of both ELINT and COMINT by satellite reconnaissance will be extraordinarily useful to the U. S. It is also clear that the data collected will be of massive proportions and to be used to intelligence must be painstakingly processed, the results being correlated with other all-source data collected by a variety of means. Particularly at the initial stages of processing, great numbers of personnel will be required. The USIB has explored

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the requirements of controlling these types of data by special security methods, including the application of the TALENT-KEYHOLE System to the products and a special security compartment within the COMINT System. The realization of the potential administrative complications and burdens of either of these approaches has in part provoked the Board's consideration of whether indeed special handling was necessary in the national security interest.

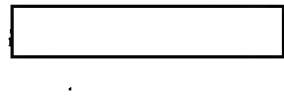
5. Telemetry is a publicly known component of the launching, control, and recovery of satellites. TIROS photography so acquired has been released to the newspapers by the U. S. The interception of electronic emanations, whether signals or voice, have long been known to be possible from line of site. Whereas the electronic equipment development achievement here does not represent the collection by satellites presents highly specialized technical breakthrough represented by our satellite photographic collection or that which we may achieve in the future. The capture of the U-2 in May 1960 with the photographic gear reasonably intact must have given the USSR a portent of U. S. photo reconnaissance capabilities. Their concern about such reconnaissance is understandable because of the tremendous quantities of critical intelligence information that can be acquired immediately and with relative small exploitation effort.

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6. If the USSR were to become aware of the quality and extent of our satellite photography, we believe that they would perhaps intensify their efforts to achieve physical countermeasures whether by destroying the satellite or by camouflage or obfuscatory activities on the ground. It is also quite possible that they might initiate political activity aimed at preventing continued collection. It is doubtful that the same sort of action would be initiated if they were made aware of satellite reconnaissance by electronic means. It is, of course, not proposed to inform them of the latter, but rather to suggest that the protection afforded by the TOP SECRET security procedures in the case of ELINT, and the COMINT procedures in the case of COMINT, provide the necessary protection and that the factors incident to the processing and exploitation of these materials for National Security purposes tend to override such slight risk as remains.

7. The United States Intelligence Board accordingly concludes:

a. That it is of first importance that the photographic satellite reconnaissance capabilities of the U. S. for the purpose of gathering intelligence data and

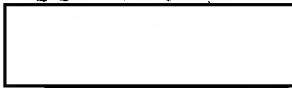
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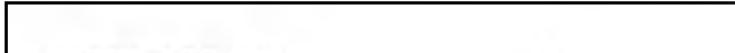
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data bearing on geodetic control should be accorded effective security protection in regard to the fact of its accomplishment as well as the scope and content of the results.

b. That the fact of electronic reconnaissance (ELINT and COMINT) is not of comparable security sensitivity and that the normal security procedures of TOP SECRET control are adequate for the ELINT products and the normal COMINT security controls are adequate for the COMINT.

c. That the security controls requisite for the products of other sensors in satellite reconnaissance be subject to the recommendation of the USIB when such products become available.

8. The foregoing conclusion relating to ELINT and COMINT (b above) necessarily requires consideration of the security procedures surrounding the operation which produces these products. Both those projects ~~are~~ now operational, and those in the planning stage are under Presidential injunction that they shall be accorded severe security protection. It would appear that this security injunction might be released. It may be necessary to continue such



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restrictions on operational grounds. This however should not extend to the handling and use of the products. Thus when they have been delivered to intelligence for exploitation analysis and correlation with other data, they should be handled under the security procedures indicated in paragraph 7 b above.

9. Recommendation: It is recommended that the ELINT products of satellite reconnaissance should be handled under normal TOP SECRET procedures and that COMINT collected by satellite reconnaissance should be subject to normal COMINT security procedures.

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14--OCI TCO
15--OSI TCO
16--ORR TCO
17--DIR NPIC
18--TSO CIA
19--C/CIA/PAD (NPIC)
20--C/DMD/NPIC
21--LO/CIA/PAD (NPIC)
22--DDP TCO
23--Intel/DPD
24--SO/DPD
25-30--C/SRS/DPD/DDP

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